

FREEMASONRY AND THE PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE (JANUARY 1919 – JUNE 1920)

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Abstract. The Romanian delegation - headed by Prime Minister Ion I.C. Brătianu - accompanied by other well-known Romanian figures who were not part of the delegation, but represented the Romanian elite who had emigrated to the French capital, attended the Paris Peace Conference and recognised that the political decisions concerning the future borders of the nations emerging from the former Austrian-Hungarian Empire were made by the *Roman Catholic Church*, the *Freemasonry* and the *Jewish Youth Organisation*. These were the institutions behind the political decisions made by the political leaders of France (Georges Clémenceau), Great Britain (Sir David Lloyd George), the United States of America (Woodrow Wilson), and Italy (Vittorio Emanuele Orlando).

When, after a conflict with the then French Prime Minister, who was failing to observe the provisions of the August 1916 Treaty concluded between Romania and the Triple Entente, Ion I.C. Brătianu left Paris, Alexandru Vaida-Voevod became his successor as head of the Romanian delegation.

The Transylvanian political leader and some of his close associates would also become members of the *Ernest Renan* Masonic lodge in Paris, on 4 August 1919. The decision was made by Alexandru Vaida-Voevod after extensive consultations with Ion I.C. Brătianu, who had returned to Bucharest by then, and Iuliu Maniu, the Chairman of the Ruling Council in Sibiu.

The masonic involvement of the Romanian delegation at the Paris Peace Conference was proof of the diplomatic abilities of its members as well as of the perfect cooperation with the local political decisionmakers, with the purpose of adjusting to the then current international context to the benefit of the country's national interests.

After Romania and Hungary signed the Treaty of Trianon (4 July 1920) whose clauses were favourable to Romania, the Romanian freemasons would leave their Masonic lodges in the coming years.

Keywords: *Ion I.C. Brătianu, Alexandru Vaida-Voevod, Paris, freemasons, 4 August 1920*

In the autumn of 1918, the Central Powers were defeated and started to withdraw from the war they had started in 1914 against the Triple Entente. Thus, instruments of surrender/truce were signed with Bulgaria (on 29 September, in Thessaloniki), the Ottoman Empire (on 31 October, in Mudros), Austria-Hungary (on 3 November, at Villa Giusti), and Germany (on 11 November, in Compiègne, a commune near Paris).

At the same time, following the breakup of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, a number of national states had proclaimed their independence and consolidated their international positions based on the idea of national unity formed around a strong national core existing even before the year 1914.

Consequently, on 28 October, the National Czechoslovakian Committee would proclaim the independence of Czechoslovakia, the Slavic federal state resulting from the union between Czechia and Slovakia. Up to then, Czechia had been a part of the Austrian-Hungarian territory ruled by Vienna, while Slovakia had been controlled by the government in Budapest ever since 1867.

On 2 November, Hungary would proclaim its own state independence, by breaking up its political ties with Austria. Actually, no later than 23 October, the newly-established Government headed by Count Károlyi Mihály had already declared the “integrity” of Hungary within its age-old borders. But, even though the political leaders of the time had sought to separate from the Government in Vienna as early as 1890-1900, what they did not seem to understand was that the national revolutions at the time were asking for the establishment of more modern national states instead of medieval-type structures.

Poland became a republic on 6 November. The Polish managed to reunite all the territories that had been occupied by Russia, German Prussia and Habsburg Austria from the late 18th century.

On 11 November, the breaking out of the anti-royalist bourgeois democratic revolution in Vienna would lead to the proclamation of the independent state of Austria.

On 24 November, the Central Popular Council in Zagreb proclaimed the establishment of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes under the ruling of the Karadjordjević Serbian dynasty. Independent Serbia gathered around it both the Croatian Slavs formerly under the political control of Hungary and the Slovenian Slavs formerly under the control of Austria. On 4 December, Montenegro – formerly under the control of Austria-Hungary, joined the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes as independent state part of a federal state reuniting the Slavic nations in the Western Balkans¹.

The unification of the Romanian provinces surrounding the Kingdom of Romania, which were still under the domination of foreign rulings, took place throughout the year 1918, while the Kingdom of Romania had been an independent national state ever since 1878. On 27 March/9 April 1918, the Kishinev National Council made the decision to bring Austrian control to an end

¹ Ștefan Pascu, *Marea Adunare Națională de la Alba Iulia. Încununarea ideii, a tendințelor și a luptelor de unitate a poporului român (The Great National Assembly of Alba Iulia. The Culmination of All the Unity Ideas, Trends and Struggles of the Romanian People)*, Cluj, 1968, pp. 330-351. See here more details on how the former Austrian-Hungarian nations fought for their independence.

and unite with Romania. Eventually, on 18 November/1 December, the Great National Assembly of Alba Iulia voted in favour of the union between the provinces of Transylvania, Banat, Crişana, and Maramureş on the one hand and Romania on the other. Greater Romania was thus formed, as a single national state gathering all the provinces that were mainly inhabited by Romanian ethnics¹.

But, even though the Central Powers had been defeated and truces had been signed with the Triple Entente coalition, the Great War was still not over. The internal political turmoil and even military conflicts between the defeated states would continue in the period between 1919 and 1923. The young Polish state, for instance, was forced to stand against the offensive of the Bolshevik Red Army seeking to occupy the Eastern Polish territories, the capital Warsaw included. Due to their courage and ability to leverage the tactical errors of the Russian Bolsheviks, the Polish managed to defeat the Red Army and to consolidate control over their own national territory².

Between 1920 and 1923, Greece and Turkey (led by Kemal Atatürk) were involved in a bloody war aimed at gaining control over the Western coastline of Anatolia and the city of Thessaloniki, two areas inhabited by numerous Greek ethnics. The conflict would end with the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne (24 July 1923), when Turkey became a republic³; this would be also the end of the Ottoman Empire.

Between January and August 1919, Germany and Hungary were plagued by Bolshevik social and political riots caused by the financial distress experienced by the majority of common citizens, but also by the political status of the two countries, which had already lost territories that had traditionally belonged to them. In January and February 1919, a riot also broke out among the sailors of the German military fleet in the ports of Bremen, Cuxhaven, and Rostock. Moreover, on 13 April 1919, the Bavarian Soviet Republic was established, but lasted for one month only.

In Hungary, the situation got even more complicated. When the “White” (bourgeoise – our note) Government headed by Dénes Berinkey and the President of the Republic, Károlyi Mihály, failed in their attempt at keeping the Hungarian territory within its “historical” borders, the “Reds” would take over the country’s political power, with the hope that the Bolsheviks led by Béla Kun would manage to maintain “the integrity of the Hungarian territory”, according to the will of the people. The Hungarian Republic of Councils (21 March - 4 August 1919) would make an attempt at establishing a direct connection by land with Lenin’s

¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 361-391.

² Michel Laran, *Russie-URSS 1878-1970*, Masson et Cie Editeurs, Paris VI, 1973, pp. 110-111.

³ *Istoria lumii de la origini până în anul 2000*, Colecția lumii, (*The History of the World from its Origins to the Year 2000*, World Collection) Larousse, Olimp Publishing House, Bucharest, 2000, pp. 516-517.

Bolshevik Russia, in order to ensure mutual support and enact “the worldwide Bolshevik revolution” in Europe. Consequently, the Bolshevik Hungarian army would make its way into Slovakia and conquer the cities of Košice (6 June) and Prešov (10 June), proclaiming the Slovak Soviet Republic. But, the military and political actions of the Government in Budapest failed, and the Romanian Army, which, by the end of April 1919, had liberated the provinces of Crișana and Maramureș, launched a counter-offensive operation on the Tisa River, causing the Hungarian Red Army to withdraw from Slovakia and the Bolshevik regime to fall on July 7; the Hungarian Red Army managed to regain its positions on the Tisa River on July 7, with the hope of preventing the Romanian Army from occupying Budapest. Nevertheless, the Romanian army would continue its march into Bolshevik Hungary, at the request of the Paris Peace Conference, as the only allied military force capable of maintaining order in Central Europe.¹

Eventually, despite the intervention of the French, British and American armies in the southern and northern European territories of Russia and that of Japan in the Far East to support the White Guard, the Russian civil war would end with the Whites being defeated. Subsequently, the Bolshevik regime would extend its control over Russia by the end of 1922².

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On 11 January 1919, the victorious Great Powers and their allies would convene at the Paris Peace Conference, against the backdrop of continuous political and military turmoil. The objectives of the Conference were very clear: the signing of peace treaties with the defeated states, the drawing of borders with the newly-established states and the calculation of war reparations and indemnities to be paid by the defeated states and their successors to the victorious countries, for the human and financial losses they had caused.

The actors of the Paris Peace Conference belonged to three main categories. First of all, there were the great victors: France, England, Italy, USA,

¹ For details, see: Gheorghe I. Brătianu, *Acțiunea politică și militară a României în 1919. În lumina corespondenței diplomatice a lui Ion I. C. Brătianu (Romania's Political and Military Actions in 1919. In the Light of the Diplomatic Correspondence of Ion I. C. Brătianu)*, Cartea Românească Publishing House, Bucharest, 1939; Dumitru Preda, Vasile Alexandrescu, Costică Prodan, *În apărarea României Mari. Campania Armatei Române din 1918-1919 (Defending Greater Romania. The Romanian Army Campaign of 1918-1919)*, Editura Enciclopedică, Bucharest, 1994, pp. 124-318; Dumitru Preda, *Sub semnul Marii Uniri. Campaniile Armatei Române pentru întregirea țării (1916-1920) (Under the sign of the Great Union. The Romanian Army Campaigns for the Unification of the Country)*, The Publishing House of the Romanian Academy, Editura Militară, Bucharest, 2019, pp. 264-347.

² Michael Laran, *op. cit.*, pp. 109-110, 124-125.

and Japan. The second category was made up of the so-called countries “with limited interests”, namely the countries which used to be part of the Entente Powers and managed to save the Western front between Germany and France during the war, thanks to their financial and human sacrifice, thus forcing Germany, Austria, Bulgaria, and the Ottoman Empire to send part of their armies to the Eastern European and North Balkan fronts. These countries included Romania, Serbia, and Italy (the latter initially a member of the Central Powers). In the spring of 1918, Romania was forced to sign a separate peace treaty with Germany and its allies (the Buftea-Bucharest Peace Treaty of 24 April/7 May), given that it had been left alone, with no support from the Entente allies, isolated and deserted by everyone, including Russia, where the Bolshevik revolution resulted in the scattering of the Russian armies on the South Moldavian front. Serbia, which had stood its ground against the German and Austrian-Hungarian offence and had heroically fought to maintain its own territory, had been forced to relocate its Royal family, Government and Parliament to Albania, then under the control of its Italian allies, as well as to a number of islands in the Adriatic Sea. The last category of participants comprised the delegations of the defeated states, namely Germany, Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey.

The delegations of the Great Powers were headed by experienced political leaders who were popular in their own countries, including Prime Minister Georges Clémenceau (France), Prime Minister Sir David Lloyd George (Great Britain), President Woodrow Wilson (USA), Prime Minister Vittorio Emanuele Orlando (Italy), and the Prime Minister of Japan¹.

Obviously, Romania was also one of the 27 participating countries of the Paris Peace Conference. The Romanian delegation was headed by Prime Minister Ionel I. C. Brătianu and comprised 40 political leaders originating from all the country's provinces, as well as professionals from various significant areas of expertise, including economists, geographers, demographers, military officers, and legal advisors. Our country's delegation would be supplemented by other non-official representatives, including Romanian politicians who had emigrated to Paris ever since the summer and autumn of 1918.

On his way to Paris, Ionel I. C. Brătianu would stop in Belgrade, to discuss with Alexander I, the Regent of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, the matter of Banat, the province then occupied by the Serbian army.

In Paris, during his diplomatic talks with the “the Big Three” (Georges Clémenceau, Sir David Lloyd George, and Woodrow Wilson), the Romanian Prime Minister would strongly request that the allies should observe the provisions laid down in the Bucharest Treaty of 4/17 August 1916, pursuant to which the Kingdom of Romania went to war as part of the Entente. The Treaty

¹ *Istoria lumii de la origini până în anul 2000 (The History of the World from its Origins to the Year 2000)*, pp. 510-511.

clearly provided that, after the successful conclusion of the war, Romania would be granted the right to unify all the provinces inhabited by Romanian ethnics in the territory between Nistru, Cheremosh, Tisa and the Danube River.

The authoritative manner in which Ionel I. C. Brătianu was defending his country's interests was not to the liking of the three political leaders who were then pulling all the strings. They claimed that, in the spring of 1918, Romania had signed a separate peace treaty with the Central Powers, a diplomatic instrument that was not included in the Alliance Treaty concluded in Bucharest. But, on the other hand, Brătianu – or “the vizier” (as he was known in the Romanian political arena, for the commanding tone he used as leader of the National Liberal Party and Prime Minister of the country), had a number of clear and sufficient reasons as to why Romania had signed the Bucharest Peace Treaty, given the country's dramatic isolation in 1918, when none of its Entente allies were helping it any longer. Romania's unification with Bessarabia and Bucovina was out of the question (at least during the first round of discussions) and, moreover, Georges Clémenceau, Romania's most committed ally in the process of reviving the national Romanian army in 1917, was of the opinion that the Western Romanian border was a very delicate matter.

Given that Poland had annexed most part of Galicia, Romania wanted to have for itself the entire territory of historical Maramureș, including the right bank of the Tisa River, where a large number of Romanians lived. Another topic for discussion was Romania's western border with Hungary. Four options were considered in respect to this matter. The French and British alternatives were favourable to Romania, with the border being set west of Satu-Mare, Carei, Oradea, Jula (Gyula), Macău (Makó), and Arad. The Italian and American alternatives provided that the border would be set east of Satu-Mare, Marghita, Tileagd, and Lipova, in breach of the applicable ethnic and economic criteria. As far as the province of Banat was concerned, “the Big Three” were supporting Serbia, giving as reason the supreme sacrifice of the Serbians for the Entente between 1914 and 1918, while Romania only joined forces in August 1916.

On the other hand, Ion I. C. Brătianu, relying on the so-called “*pré carré*” approach of the French, i.e. safe, natural borders such as rivers and mountain chains, was trying to explain that the western Romanian-Hungarian border should have been set on the Tisa River (or as close to it as possible) and the Danube River, taking into account the existing ethnic and economic criteria. From an ethnical point of view, Hungary would have been left with a significant number of Romanians¹, while the territory between the Tisa Fields and the Western

¹ After the current Romanian-Hungarian border had been established, around 250,000 Romanian ethnics remained in Hungary and were almost entirely denationalized between 1920 and 1990.

Carpathians was characterised by “an obvious geographic and economic consistency”¹.

Between January and June 1919, the Romanian delegation would face the adverse pressures coming from Serbia, Austria, and Hungary, but also the lack of geographical knowledge on the part of “the Big Three”². Besides the matter of the Romanian-Czechoslovakian-Hungarian-Serbian western border, discussions also revolved around the Minority Treaty, including the issue of the Jewish populations, which was considered a matter of international concern. Ionel I. C. Brătianu and his associates were deeply involved in actions aimed at defending Romania’s sovereignty. Having acknowledged that “the Big Three” had been discussing the matter of the border between Bessarabia and Bolshevik Russia, on 2 July 1919, the Romanian Prime-Minister would leave Paris, after appointing Nicolae Mișu, a Romanian diplomat, as his first alternate. He would be accompanied by Alexandru Vaida-Voevod on his way to the Paris railway station³.

The signing of the Peace Treaty with Germany on 28 June 1919 in Versailles would pave the way for the next major objective, namely the signing of peace treaties with the defeated states. The actions of the Romanian delegation would take on new meanings, since new treaties had to be concluded with Bulgaria, Austria, and Hungary.

In this context, the political forces in Bucharest acted with remarkable solidarity, overcoming their long-standing disagreements and appointing a national unity government headed by Alexandru Vaida-Voevod on December 1919⁴. The fact that the newly-appointed Prime Minister was originally from Transylvania and was already acquainted with the members of the Hungarian delegation, as well as his calm demeanour which contrasted with the volcanic temper of the former Prime Minister, Ionel I. C. Brătianu, were well-received by the leaders who were present at the Paris Peace Conference.

The Romanian delegation in Paris and the other Romanian politicians who had emigrated to France ever since 1918 had just enough time to realise which institutions were influencing the discussions and the resolutions of the

¹ The statement belongs to the French geographer Jacques Ancel, according to Ion Toderașcu, *Unitatea românească medievală (Romanian Medieval Unity)*, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, Bucharest, 1988, pp. 96-127.

² For details, see Gheorghe I. Brătianu, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-99.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 98. See the recent volume *România la Conferința de Pace de la Paris (1919-1920). Documente diplomatice (10 decembrie 1918-28 iunie 1919) (Romania at the Paris Peace Conference (1919-1920), Diplomatic Documents (10 December – 28 June 1919))*, Edition by Dumitru Preda, Ioan Chiper, Alexandru Ghiță, Semne Publishing House, Bucharest, 2010.

⁴ *Academia Română. Istoria Românilor (The Romanian Academy. The History of Romanians)*, coordinator: Prof. Ioan Scurtu, Ph.D., secretary: Petre Otu, Ph.D., volume VIII, Editura Enciclopedică, Bucharest, 2003, pp. 248-249. In particular, the “Parliamentary Bloc Government”.

Conference, namely the Roman-Catholic Church, the Freemasonry, and the Jewish Youth Organisation. The Greek-Catholics from Transylvania who were part of the Romanian delegation led by Alexandru Vaida-Voevod were the ones who were able to determine the Roman-Catholic Church to act in Romania's favour. The Greek-Catholics and the Orthodox in Transylvania had been the leaders of the fight for national unity before 1918 and then, were jointly involved in the planning processes and resolutions of the Great National Assembly in Alba Iulia. After 1878, the Jewish ethnics in Romania would be granted a number of additional rights, including the right to apply for citizenship, subject to several restrictive conditions, nonetheless. All the minorities were able to benefit from the many advantages conferred upon them by the democratic times that followed the Great War. Moreover, Jewish ethnics were even more interested in defending Romania's interests at the Paris Peace conference as a result of their involvement in some of the country's key economic areas, particularly the oil sector¹.

The media acted as the spokesperson of all the three institutions above and that is why it had to be granted incentives, including monetary inducements. This was exactly what Hortensia Cosma-Goga had noticed. She had taken refuge in Italy since mid-1917, together with her parents and sister, Lucia, and wrote a number of letters to her husband who had been in Paris since 20 September 1918, highlighting the role of the media in the diplomatic encounters that took place in Paris at the time: "Each of the countries (England, France, Italy, Switzerland – our note) should have a large newspaper rooting for them... You should give them the money they deserve; now everything it's about the spoken word"². In another letter, Hortensia Cosma-Goga advises her husband as follows: "You should make a connection with the Americans. Try and establish official connections and I will take care of the newspapers (in Italy – our note). We (the Romanians – our note) should be careful not to draw the shortest straw yet again"³.

Through the media, the Freemasons were connecting and controlling both the Church and the Jewish Youth Organisation.

Having its roots in ancient Egypt and becoming more and more visible and involved in the Enlightenment and Revolutions of the 18th century, masonic organisations were quite common in the North American states and in Europe. The Freemasons were organised in lodges that belonged to various orders and had a number of international objectives, on top of the national economic and political interests of their members. In the end, the institution sought to play the role of a supernational government.

¹ The hallways of Versailles "smelled of Romanian oil", according to Gheorghe I. Brătianu, *op. cit.*, pp. 84, 92.

² The Romanian Academy Library in Bucharest, *Octavian Goga Fonds*, Letter 11(78) LDLXXXVIII, p. 3.

³ *Ibidem*, Letter 11(84) CDLXXXVIII, pp. 3-4.

In the Kingdom of Romania, Freemasonry was of French descent. The Transylvanian masonic lodges were subordinated to their peers in Hungary, Austria, and Germany and most of their members were Hungarian, Hungarian Jewish, Transylvanian Saxon and Slovene ethnics, with very few Romanians among them¹. To our knowledge, of the well-known Transylvanian political figures, Octavian Goga had become a freemason in 1910, as member of the Scottish Rite, following a trip to Scotland, visiting his good friend Robert William Seton-Watson (the journalist known as Scotus Viator). The latter was a true defender of the Austrian-Hungarian nations, particularly Romania, in the fight for their rights².

Behind the stages of the Paris Peace Conference, people were claiming that Woodrow Wilson, Georges Clémenceau, Sir David Lloyd George, and Vittorio Emanuele Orlando were members of the Freemasonry, together with many other diplomats and experts in their teams³.

Under the circumstances, following the advice of Ionel I. C. Brătianu, who was in Bucharest at the time, Alexandru Vaida-Voevod would take the necessary steps for his admission to Freemasonry. He would be accompanied in his endeavours by Caius Brediceanu, Voicu Nițescu, Traian Vuia, Mihai Șerban, George Crișan, and Ion Pillat⁴. On 4 August 1919, they were admitted in the *Ernest Renan* lodge from Paris, with the support of Marcel Huart, the editor-in-chief of the influential daily newspaper *Le Temps*. The latter was also an important figure in the *Ernest Renan* lodge, acting as the then current Venerable Master⁵.

¹ Gheorghe Bichicean, *Din istoria Francmasoneriei. Alexandru Vaida-Voevod (The History of Freemasonry. Alexandru Vaida-Voevod)*, 2nd Edition, Armanis Publishing House, Sibiu, 2013, pp. 36-37; *Masoneria în Transilvania. Repere istorice (Freemasonry in Transylvania. Historical Milestones)*, coordinators: Tudor Sălăgean, Marius Eppel, 3rd Edition, Argonaut Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2010.

² Mihai D. Drecin, „Antecedente ale apropierii lui Octavian Goga de Masonerie. Studiu de caz: corespondența dintre soții Goga din anii exilului italo-francez (toamna 1918-toamna 1919) (*The Events Leading to Octavian Goga's Relationship with the Freemasons. Case study: the Correspondence Exchanged between the Goga Spouses in the Years of Exile to Italy and France (Autumn 1918 – Autumn 1919)*)”, in *Gnosis – revista de gândire, tradiție și cultură masonică (Gnosis – Journal of Masonic Thinking, Tradition and Culture)*, Year V, issue no. 5, Sibiu, 2019, p. 15.

³ Gheorghe Bichicean, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-54.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 59. See also: Liviu Maior, *Alexandru Vaida Voevod între Belvedere și Versailles (înscrișuri, memorii, scrisori) (Alexandru Vaida Voevod between Belvedere and Versailles (writings, memoirs and letters))*, Sincron Publishing House, 1993; Idem, *Alexandru Vaida Voevod (1872-1950). Miedzy dwoma swiatami*, The Publishing House of the Romanian Academy/Center for Transylvanian Studies, Cluj University Press, Cluj-Napoca, 2017.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 55.

From this newly-acquired position, the Romanian delegation at the Paris Peace Conference, in permanent dialogue by correspondence with Iuliu Maniu and Ionel I. C. Brătianu, would achieve a number of victories in defending Romania's national interests. "Content with the departure of Ion I. C. Brătianu, the Westerners immediately removed from the draft Minority Treaty all the wordings that had annoyed him (Brătianu – our note), which resulted in the signing by Romania of the long-disputed Minority Treaty, at the beginning of December 1919, as well as of the Peace Treaties with Austria and Bulgaria, in the period 1919 to 1920"¹.

The provisions of the Peace Treaty of Trianon (4 June 1920) concluded with Hungary, would largely observe the required ethnic and economic principles. The Treaty also established the borders between Romania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Serbia. Romania would not be granted the entire territory of Banat, down to north Belgrade, as provided for in the Alliance Treaty concluded in Bucharest and moreover, the Romanian diplomats and the Bucharest Government would make a terrible blunder, as a result of hastiness and lack of awareness of the historical and ethnic realities in Maramureș. Thus, at the end of 1920, the Government headed by General Alexandru Averescu, the Romanian authorities and the Romanian Army would retreat from the territory of Maramureș lying north of the Tisa River, with the territory becoming part of the state of Czechoslovakia. Tens of thousands of Romanians would be left outside the borders of Romania as a result².

In Romania, Alexandru Vaida-Voevod, together with other "Romanian Freemasons from Paris" would become less involved in their relationships with Freemasonry and would be excluded from its ranks in December 1931³. One of the reasons behind this decision was his right-wing political orientation, which was not in line with the way in which the Freemasons perceived social consensus and accord.

The masonic involvement of the Romanian delegation at the Paris Peace Conference highlights the ability of its members to adjust to the international context at the time as well as the agreement reached with the national political forces to the benefit of Romania's national interests. During two years of extensive diplomatic pursuits, the Romanian diplomats had shown in their relationships with the most important decisionmakers at the time both firm

¹ *Ibidem*, p. 39.

² For details, see: *Maramureșul istoric. Studii de Istorie și Arheologie (Historical Maramureș. History and Archaeology Studies)*, coordinators: Mihai D. Drecin, Gabriel Moisa, Delia Cora, Cristian Culiciu, The Publishing House of the Romanian Academy/Center for Transylvanian Studies, Cluj-Napoca, 2020, pp. 12-13. See also the article wrote by Sever Dumitrașcu and Florin Sfrengeu featured in this Journal.

³ Gheorghe Bichicean, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

antagonistic attitudes in defence of Romania's national interests (see the actions of Ion I. C. Brătianu) and amicable affiliations (see the temporary masonic connections of Alexandru Vaida-Voevod¹ and his associates).

All the above are good examples for our contemporary times, when, as the conservative politician Alexandru Marghiloman said², “we should not keep all our eggs in the same basket”. In other words, Romania's present and future political relations should be at least opportunistic, if not straight out friendly, considering the geopolitical features of our country's territory. In the end, we should attempt at defending ourselves by being smart³.

¹ On 20 October 1918, on the occasion of the national festivities taking place under the name “Masoneria Română la 100 de ani (*Romanian Freemasonry, 100 years of Existence*)” (18-21 October) in Alba Iulia, the statue of the bust of Alexandru Vaida-Voevod was unveiled in the Citadel where the historic event of the unification took place. The event was organised as part of a National Assembly of Romanian Freemasons, who sponsored the manufacturing of the statue of the Transylvanian politician.

² Leader of the Conservative Party, minister in various conservative Governments ruling the Kingdom of Romania before 1914, Prime Minister between March and October 1918, a supporter of close relationships between Romania and Germany. He signed the Buftea-Bucharest Peace Treat, offering Romania more time to prepare for the victory of the allies on the western front.

³ This paper was also featured in the Journal *Identitatea Națională* (Oradea), issue no. 1 (5), December 2020, published by the Avram Iancu Cultural and Patriotic Association – Oradea Branch. The Journal's 2020 issue was dedicated to the *Trianon Centenary*.